



*Staffordshire
Archaeological
and Historical Society*
**NEWSLETTER May
2018**



Web: www.sahs.uk.net

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email: sahs@sahs.uk.net

President:

Dr John Hunt BA, PhD, FSA, FRHistS, PGCE. Tel: 01543423549

Hon. General Secretary:

Vacant

Hon. Treasurer:

Mr K J Billington, ACIB.

Tel: 01543 278989



The Quire Screen at Lichfield Cathedral by Francis Skidmore

IMPORTANT GDPR

Will all Members please read the article contained within this Newsletter regarding the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Following GDPR we hope to be able to STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU ALL.

THE KNAVES CASTLE ENIGMA

By Sam Whitehouse, B Sc, C Eng MICE

Introduction

In **Part One (Newsletter 126)** of this work I sought to find early historical descriptions, including maps, and provide full details of these. In **Part Two (Newsletter 127)** I used these sources to develop a plan, cross-section and perspective sketch of this curious earthworks as it would have appeared in ancient times.

Now in **Part Three** I investigate the possible original purpose of the site and argue that it may have served as a marker in at least two astronomical alignments. The reader is asked to entertain some novel and possibly controversial theories.

[Note on units of measurement – as old written and mapping sources use imperial measurements, I have generally kept to the same system)

PART THREE – PURPOSE AND USES

The site and its possible former uses

It is quite evident that Knaves Castle wasn't an Iron Age fortress like Castle Ring, simply because the platform on the mound was so small – the whole idea of a fortress was to gather the local people, their animals and possessions and to provide a place that was safe and capable of being defended in the event of a possible attack. Castle Ring would no doubt also have had a wooden palisade. Knaves Castle may well have been a Roman watch-point and later, in Plot's time (1686) a place of guards or even robbers. In 1693 it "hath a breast work about it"- in 1769 it had a fir tree "growing on the centre"- "a guide or landmark", however if the place was indeed Bronze Age, we must seek an answer elsewhere.

In her paper 'The Landscape of the Staffordshire Hoard', Della Hooke has this to say - "Knaves Castle was a raised hillock beside the road but, in spite of being variously described as a possible tumulus or even a moated site, nothing unnatural was observed during road-widening in 1971 and it was then thought that the mound was probably natural (OS card:WM 2664: confirmed by Mike Shaw, West Midlands Archaeology officer)".

I would comment as follows:

Firstly - as all traces of the ancient earthworks had disappeared by the early 1900's, it is hardly surprising that no evidence was found of embankments or ditches.

Secondly - given that by 1971 the Knaves Castle mound was reduced by some 70 feet, ie, nearly one third of its original diameter, it is significant that no human remains have ever been found - so it was not a barrow, or burial place; in fact no signs of human habitation such as food remains, ie animal bones; no personal items such as utensils, ornaments etc. So if nobody lived there, and no-one was buried there, the site can only have been used for ceremonial purposes. The central platform of Knaves Castle must have been used for some function, as it had an access from the south. A small number of people could assemble there, but for what purpose? I suggest that the platform, with its single tree, was a sighting point. So did the

ancients sight *from or towards Knaves Castle*? Looking East from Knaves Castle one could see firstly the Hoard site, then Muckley Corner.

In the opening statement to this work, I noted the phenomenon of the sun rising to the east, aligned exactly along Watling Street. This alignment seems to begin at the Rising Sun Inn, where the road changes direction. (Whilst I have earlier in this work suggested that the prehistoric track may have extended further to the west, I have been unable to come to any definite conclusions on this issue). From the Rising Sun starting point then, we come to Knaves Castle in 1.25 miles and arrive at the Golden Hoard site at Hammerwich at 3 miles, we arrive at Wall in about 4 miles. It may be significant that the Rising Sun, Knaves Castle and the Golden Hoard site all lie just south of Watling Street, thus the equinoctial alignment followed Watling street but some distance to the south.

Measuring from the 1884 1:2500 OS map, I find the Rising Sun Inn to be 130 feet from the centreline of the road. The same exercise for Knaves Castle, this time using the 1884 1:2500 OS map results in a distance from the centreline of the road to the tump (shown on the map) to be 120 feet; unfortunately, whilst no similar precise information is available for the Hoard site, I estimate the actual hoard at about 200 feet south of the old Watling Street. Della Hooke also said “It is not clear whether any barrow once marked the find spot but some feature appears to have caused a late 19th century hedge and/or ditch boundary to swerve away from it”. The fact that no evidence was found to support the existence of an ancient earthworks at the hoard site does not of itself conclusively prove that none had existed – after all, in 1971 it was said that Knaves Castle was not an ancient earthworks.

As mentioned earlier in this work, Watling Street falls Westward away from Knaves Castle to the Rising Sun and to the East to the Golden Hoard Site; thus, whilst both the Rising Sun area and the Golden Hoard site could be seen from Knaves Castle mound, it was not possible to see the Golden Hoard site from the Rising Sun, or vice versa - *unless* for example a platform was built at the Rising Sun, sighting onto a marker at the Golden Hoard Site; this would need to be some 50 to 80 feet high. Could it have been a fir tree, as at Knaves Castle? This theory however still requires the removal of trees for a sight line - of course, this had been done for the prehistoric track, so I suppose it could equally have been done for the sight line.

On the general question of equinoctial alignments, Aubrey Burl in his book 'The Stone Circles of Britain, Ireland and Brittany' [Pub Yale,2000] accepts the existence of such alignments (although uncommon) and identifies sites where these have been recorded.

An intriguing comment by Reece, whilst describing an old colliery map - “Shallow pits and bell pits on Brownhills Common c1800. I can find no explanation for the fact that the Rising Sun (in the top left hand corner) is referred to as the sign of the Star”. My study of Alexander Thom's book 'Megalithic Sites in Britain' (table 8.1) suggests that a likely candidate was Procyon which rises in the East - also found described in other sources as “the star of the crossing of the water dog”, ie the Milky Way. It seems very curious however that the Rising Sun location could have given rise to such astronomical alignments, unless the area was host to a much older site than has previously been supposed. What is known is that there has been an inn on this site since at least the coaching era – the timber fingerpost which stood at the

junction of Watling Street and Chester Road was reputed to have dated from 1777; in a post on 'BrownhillsBobs' blog, in 2011 a correspondent notes that her father, a builder, had worked on the old Rising sun Inn and reckoned that parts of it dated from the 1630's.

Is it possible that there was a tavern here in Roman Times? “The hostelries of Roman England were derived from the *caupona* and the *tabernae* of Rome itself. These were followed by alehouses, which were run by women (alewives) and marked by a broom stuck out above the door. The English inns of the Middle Ages were sanctuaries of wayfaring strangers, cut-throats, thieves and political malcontents” [Brittanica.com]

When the Romans built these roads, they established wayside stations, thus at about four miles intervals would be a *mutatio* where mounted messengers could change horses and a tavern to obtain refreshment. Every twelve miles was a *mansio*, a full scale wayside inn with large stables, tavern, rooms for travellers and even bath houses – these would also house detachments of troops. Wall was such a place. The distance from Wall to the Rising Sun was/is just four miles, so it may be reasonably speculated that there was a *mutatio* on the site, which became the Rising Sun at a much later date. Furthermore, although very tentatively, I would suggest that on the rise of land where Watling Street changes direction, there existed an ancient earthworks which would largely have been lost during the construction by the Romans of a 'new' Watling Street towards Cannock, whilst any lingering remnants would have been destroyed by the construction of the Norton Branch railway and its associated bridge (over Watling Street) in circa 1857.

(NB- when I refer to the slight rise in ground levels at the change of direction of Watling Street near the Rising Sun, I refer to the **original** ground levels; the summit of the existing bridge is considerably higher than the adjacent ground levels).

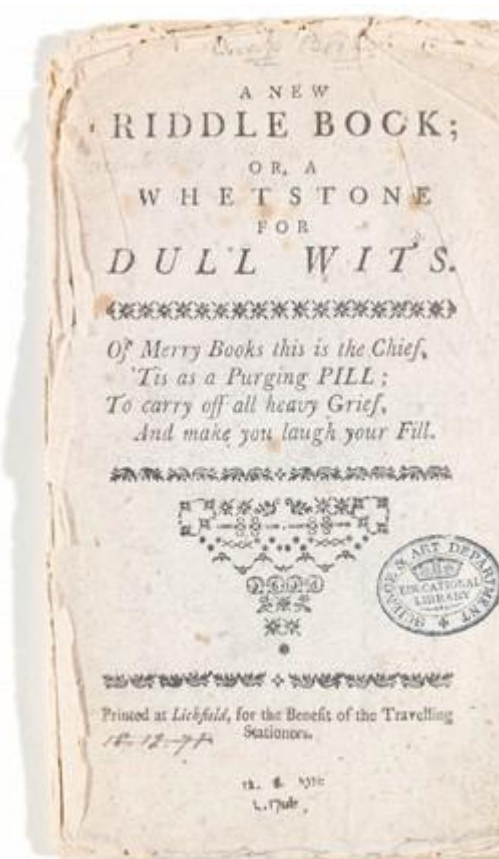
Earlier in this work I touched upon the curious geographical configuration that embraced not only Knaves Castle, but also Castle Ring, Catshill, Shire Oak and Barr Beacon all in a straight line, with an azimuth bearing of 354 degrees – it was **not intended** to be true north. I can only suggest that the alignment is to Deneb, which Alexander Thom lists in his table 8.1 for Seascale a “good outlier”. Deneb is the brightest star in the Milky Way.

Was Knaves Castle situated on the intersection both of this and the West-East alignment?

If so, I wonder if it was originally called 'Nave Castle' ie, as in the nave of a wheel- ie, a hub from which spokes radiate.

Conclusions

One must be drawn inevitably to the conclusion that in this area, in ancient times, there existed significant ceremonial sites which generated astronomical alignments. We have seen how Knaves Castle itself was so eroded by natural processes that virtually no trace remained by the early 1900's - if it was not for the early scholars, and old maps, we would not know that it had ever existed. I do not suggest that there was a 'Stonehenge' in the region but there could easily have been earthworks which are unrecorded, which have long disappeared, been forgotten, and thus whose original purpose is lost in the mists of time, but which might yet be re-discovered.



Riddles were a very popular in the eighteenth century. Here is a Riddle Book, or a whetstone for Dull Wits published anonymously around 1790 in Lichfield for the benefit of travelling stationers. (Now in the V & A Museum.)

Try this one:

*Though of great age,
I'm kept in a cage,
Having a long tail and one ear,
My mouth it is round,
And when joys do abound,
O, then I sing wonderful clear.*

Skidmore in Lichfield and Hereford Cathedrals

Diana Wilkes

In the last Society Newsletter, Betty Fox reported on the Society's visit to Hereford Cathedral. She touched on a screen made by Skidmore who also worked on a screen in Lichfield Cathedral.

The Hereford screen, like the one in Lichfield was designed by George Gilbert Scott, and made by Francis Skidmore of Coventry . It was made in a period of four months and to achieve this Skidmore took short cuts and used mass techniques. Skidmore displayed the Hereford screen at the 1862 Exhibition in London where it won a medal for superior design.

The screen was dismantled and removed from the Cathedral in 1967 and was purchased by the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry. The Museum was unable to restore and display it and it languished unloved until 1983. That year the screen was transferred to the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was in 14,000 pieces and in very poor condition. The conservation of the screen took thirteen months and was the largest conservation undertaken by the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is now on display to the public.

Francis Albert Skidmore was born in Birmingham in 1812. He was the son of Francis Skidmore, a jeweller. The Skidmore family moved to Coventry, a watch making centre, in

1822. Skidmore was taught metal working by his father and completed a seven year apprenticeship with him. In 1845 father and son registered as silversmiths under F. Skidmore and Son. Their early work was mainly church plate and examples of their work consist of three chalices made for St John's church Coventry, St Giles Exhall and St Alkmunds Derby.

The 1850s saw a period of expansion and development of Skidmore's career as a metal worker. In 1851 at The Great Exhibition he exhibited church plate amongst which was a silver gilt and enamelled chalice. This was now displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The exposure at the Great Exhibition helped to promote his business. The business soon expanded and began to produce other church furnishings including items in brass, iron and wood. In 1851, Skidmore received commissions to produce gas lighting in St Michael's Church Coventry. The Skidmore firm went on to install gas lighting in St Mary's Guildhall and Holy Trinity Church in Coventry. At Holy Trinity some of his ironwork, wooden pews and gas lamp standards are still in situ.

In the 1850s Skidmore met George Gilbert Scott, a well known architect. Skidmore worked for many people but his long lasting working relationship with Scott resulted in several important commissions. Skidmore worked with Scott on Lichfield, Hereford and Salisbury Cathedrals and the Albert Memorial in London.

Towards the end of his life Skidmore's eyesight began to deteriorate. He was disabled after being hit by a carriage in London. He spent the end of his life in poverty in Eagle Street Coventry.

Skidmore died on 13th November 1896 and was buried in London Road Cemetery in Coventry. He was survived by his widow, Emma and four children, Francis Sidney, Bernard, Evangeline and Kenneth. In 2000 a memorial plaque was installed at the site of Skidmore's Albert Street Factory, Hillfields Coventry .

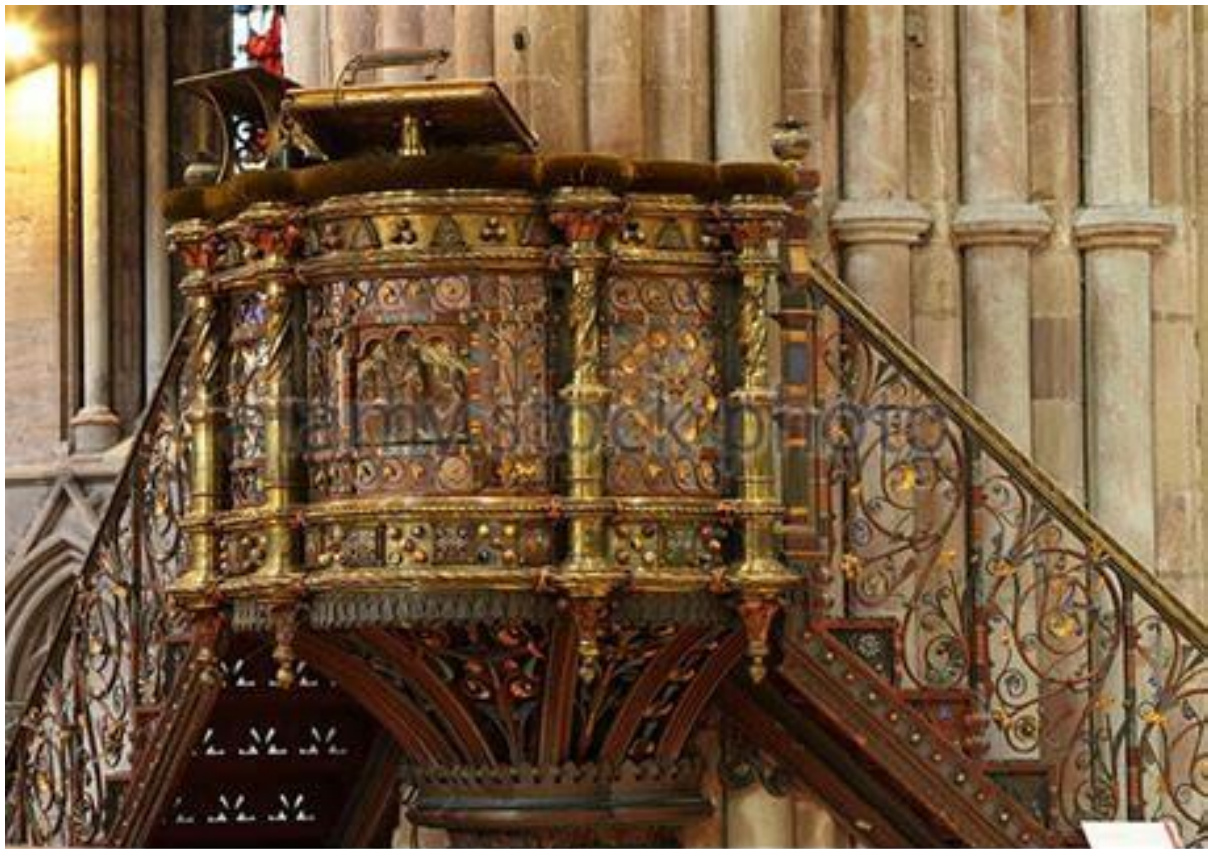
Skidmore's life was a productive one. He created works for twenty four cathedrals, three hundred plus parish churches, fifteen colleges and several public buildings.

His prominent works included screens in the Cathedrals of Hereford, Lichfield and Worcester. In Worcester Cathedral between 1864 and 1874, Gilbert Scott worked on restoration work, mainly in the choir. This work included a screen from Skidmore. This was installed in 1873 and is still in place. It is not as elaborate as the Hereford or Lichfield screens.

The Lichfield Cathedral screen is known as the Skidmore Screen by some of the Cathedral congregation and volunteers. It forms a screen to the Quire and side aisles. In 1957, Smirke, the then cathedral architect removed a stone screen thus giving an uninterrupted view from the west end of the nave to the Herkenrode stained glass windows in the Lady Chapel. George Gilbert Scott was appointed architect in September 1857 and designed the present screen which was installed in 1861. Aided by Skidmore Scott designed similar screens at Salisbury (no longer extant) and at Ely Worcester and Hereford. The Lichfield Screen retains some of the original colourings best seen by torchlight or flash camera . The Lichfield Screen was made from wrought iron, copper and brass with applied polychrome, mainly red green and gilt. It cost £1000. The colours of angels' wings and original paint work can still be picked out. The angels are a reminder of St Chad's vision of angels coming to take him to heaven. (The Cathedral is dedicated to St Chad and the Virgin Mary.)The angels by John Birnie Phillips play

a variety of musical instruments. Psalm 150 mentions instruments and it is believed that Scott used this for inspiration. The screen is set with semi precious stones and ivory. The red currants are made from cornelian, the white currants from ivory. The grapes are onyx and unripe strawberries and white rose hips from ivory.

The nearby pulpit was designed by George Gilbert Scott and made by Skidmore from wrought iron, copper, brass, enamel and marble. The central bronze group represents Saint Peter preaching on the day of the Pentecost. Two stairways counterbalance the pulpit which is balanced on a small pillar. The eastern stairway is the one in current use. The western stairway was traditionally used by a canon after preaching his or her last sermon in the Cathedral.



The pulpit Lichfield Cathedral

Currently the pulpit is undergoing some minor repairs with Blue John (from Derbyshire), Cabochons being replaced. The finial work will not be cleaned as its shiny appearance would be out of keeping.

Lichfield Cathedral is open daily and information guides or tour guides will be happy to talk to visitors about the screen pulpit and many other highlights on offer.

**STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 2018-19**

Membership fees: Individual £20, Joint £30, Student/Unemployed £15

Title.....

Names(s).....

Address.....

.....Postcode

Email

Phone.....

I agree to allow the Society to contact me/us by email and telephone.

I/we enclose £..... for my/our subscription for the year 2018-19 for Individual / Joint / Student / Unemployed.

SignedDate

Please send to Ms S Lupton, 71 Birchwood Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9UN

Note: Direct Payments can be made using PayPal™ option on the Web site.

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GIFT AID DECLARATION

TO: STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Choosing to Gift Aid the Subscription or donations you make to the SAHS will allow the Society, which enjoys Charitable status, to reclaim from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs the basic rate of Income Tax paid on the amount of those subscriptions or donations without any cost to you, the Member. It is only necessary to fill the form in once.

To do this you must be a UK Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax payer and have paid an amount at least equal to the tax the Society reclaims in the Tax Year concerned. Declaration:

Members Full Name

Address

.....Post Code.....

I would like the Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society (SAHS) to treat as Gift Aid all Subscriptions and Donations I make from the Date of this Declaration.

Signature.....

Date.....

SAHS visit to Bradgate Park
Wednesday 20 June 2018 4.00pm



Bradgate Park is first documented in 1241 (as a deer park) but is best known as the location of one of the first unfortified brick-built aristocratic houses in England (c. 1520), which was later the birth place and childhood home of Lady Jane Grey: the 'nine days queen'. Despite this historical significance, very little is known about the changing use of this landscape despite the richness of the archaeological evidence. The aim of the Bradgate Park Fieldschool is to better understand changing human interactions within this upland landscape, provide students with training in archaeology and promote public engagement.

The third season of excavations concluded in July 2017 and included some major new discoveries: a late Mesolithic flint scatter, a Bronze Age enclosure and a revision of our understanding of Lady Jane Grey's home. In February 2018 project co-director Dr. Richard Thomas, in a talk to the Society earlier this year summarised the findings of the first three seasons of work and described the plans for future seasons.

To follow Dr Thomas' talk we have arranged a visit to the site, primarily to view the excavations made during the 2018 season which will be nearing its end at the time of our visit.

Meet at the main car park for Bradgate Park close to the village of Newton Linford at 4.00pm when we will start to walk through the Park to the site of the mansion, which will take about 20 to 30 minutes depending on how fast we walk. We shall see the current excavations. There is no finishing time and the park is open until sunset. The Conservatory Tea Room at the car park is open until 5.00pm. Cost £3 per person. Please make out cheques to SAHS and either leave your name e mail address and cheque at the desk at the end of a meeting or send to Richard Totty Rock Cottage Redhill Rugeley WS15 4LL. Note that there is a car parking charge of £3 payable locally. The journey by car from Lichfield to Newton Linford (LE6 0AE) will take a little over an hour .

Medieval Trading Routes ; a new database for research



An illustration of the *Henry Grace à Dieu*, the largest ship in King Henry VIII's navy.

Researchers at the University of Southampton have undertaken the mammoth task of mapping the complex network of merchant trading routes and ports that operated during the late medieval and Tudor periods. The project team analysed 50,000 ship movements between more than 600 ports in England and Wales from AD 1400-1580, scouring heaps of data from custom accounts, navy payrolls, and national ship surveys. The fruit of their labour, a fully searchable database that is categorised by criteria including port, crew, or voyage, is now available to the public at www.medievalandtudorships.org. Users can click on each port, ship, or journey for detailed information; and there are also two interactive maps, highlighting the shipping routes as well as departure points and destinations.

‘Our website and maps give a fascinating insight into the structure of shipping in England and Wales during what was a period of fundamental importance to our history: a time when the seeds of maritime empire were sown,’ said Dr Craig Lambert, principal investigator on the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project. ‘At the start of the late medieval and Tudor period, English shippers were mainly coastal traders – but by the end, Francis Drake had set out on his voyage of circumnavigation and Walter Raleigh was close to planting England’s first settlers on Roanoke Island in North America.’ One of the project’s highlights is its detailing of the number of medieval ports that have now faded into obscurity. While those at Southampton, Falmouth, Cardiff, and Liverpool thrive today much as they did 500 years ago, many other prominent sites are now not much known for their maritime exploits. These include Cley-next-the-Sea in Norfolk and Millbrook in Cornwall. The most dramatic change, however, is Dunwich in Suffolk. Once a major international port, the harbour fell victim to flooding and erosion from several major storms over the years, and has now completely disappeared.

This article is reprinted from in [*Current Archaeology* 338](#).

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) **IMPORTANT**

If you belong to a group such as the National Trust or RSPB, you will be aware of the forthcoming change in the data protection laws, and will have been asked to fill in a form and return it accordingly.

It's all to do with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which becomes effective on 25th May 2018. We undertook our own postal exercise by which all SA&HS Members were sent and asked to complete a GDPR Consent Form, this being done at the beginning of March. Thank you to almost all of the Membership who have dealt with the forms and returned them.

There are however a certain number of forms yet to come back. It is important that you let us know how to contact you as otherwise you may not hear from us, for example, regarding organised excursions and visits, other events we are involved in or which you may be interested in and things like changes to the regular programmes of lectures. So, if you have not yet done so, please complete and return your Consent Form as soon as you can. If you are one of those affected, it is likely you will receive either a letter or an email from us.

On the forms, we've asked for email addresses and telephone numbers. This is to ensure the contact data we hold is accurate and up to date. SA&HS will always keep your details secure and will never pass information about you to a third party. That is excepting where names and addresses are provided to HMRC under the Gift Aid Scheme, on annual Gift Aid Claims made.

NB You'll still continue to receive the *Newsletters*, *Transactions* and *Lecture Programmes Cards*. That is whether you tick boxes on the Consent Form or not.

For anything to do with GDPR and the Consent Forms, please contact Keith Billington, SA&HS Honorary Treasurer. Email: kjboutthere@yahoo.co.uk Telephone: 01543 278989

A big thank you to everybody.

Keith Billington

Obituary - Former Society Member John Salloway

John Salloway who was a leading figure in the Lichfield business community died in February this year. He was 89. John and his wife Mary, who survives him, had been Members of SA&HS since the 1970s and had been conspicuous supporters of the Society, being very regular attendees at lectures and other events. The Salloway family had a tradition of being associated with SA&HS in that John's parents William and Gladys Salloway joined in the very early 1960s not that long after the creation of the then Lichfield Archaeological & Historical Society.

John Salloway was very active in the local community, a former magistrate, he was the longest serving Freeman in the prestigious City of Lichfield Worshipful Company of Smiths. Educated at Gordonstoun, a highly skilled jeweller and optician, amongst many talents, he in particular became an expert in the understanding of the science of diamonds. Through his efforts the business of Salloways Jewellers was built and thrives to this day in Bore Street. The 1982 transformation of St Mary's church in Lichfield to become the Heritage Centre was in part due to the enthusiasm and involvement of John to see the project through, in particular the creation of the treasury and the design and set up of the gift shop.

His funeral took place on 22nd February attended by large numbers of people, including representatives from SA&HS. A full and lengthy obituary appeared in the Lichfield Mercury on 15th February.

Keith Billington

Wall Roman site museum- Opening times 2018

Wall museum contains displays of objects found in excavations on the baths and mansio and other sites in Wall including the Roman cemetery. It is manned by the Friends of Letocetum volunteer group, admission is free, and it is open from 11am to 4 pm on the following days (usually last weekend of each month, Bank Holiday weekends and Bank Holiday Mondays, and all weekends in August):

May 5, 6, 7, 26, 27, 28; June 23, 24; July 28, 29; August 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 25, 26, 27; September 29, 30; October 27, 28

The museum is on Watling Street in Wall village WS14 0AW. There is a car park a short distance from the Museum. The excavated remains of the baths and mansio (English Heritage/National Trust: open all the time) are close to the Museum and a guidebook can be purchased at the Museum.

News from the blogs

Here we reprint some of the history blogs from Staffordshire sources which you may have missed. This month one from the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery posted earlier this year.

The rather enigmatic portrait of a lady, known as *The Lilac Dress*, is one of the earliest paintings purchased for the museum's fine art collection in 1926. The Lancashire-born artist Phillip Connard RA (1875-1958), first worked as a house painter and studied art part-time until he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. He received a British Institution prize which enabled him to study in Paris. Like earlier British painters such as Walter Sickert and Wilson Steer, Connard's time in the French capital shaped his artistic practice. Connard explored new painting techniques influenced by the French Impressionists, and he returned to France frequently after 1898. He developed a tonal impressionism in his painting, which can be seen in *The Lilac Dress*. The sitter's identity is not as important as the expression of atmosphere through the interplay of light,



shade and colour through the artist's application of rapid, broken brush strokes used to delineate her figure, dress and her surroundings. *The Lilac Dress* is one of at least three female portraits by Connard which focus on colour and dress: *Portrait of a Lady in Grey*, *Lady in Pink* and *The Red Gown* which may have been completed around the same time.

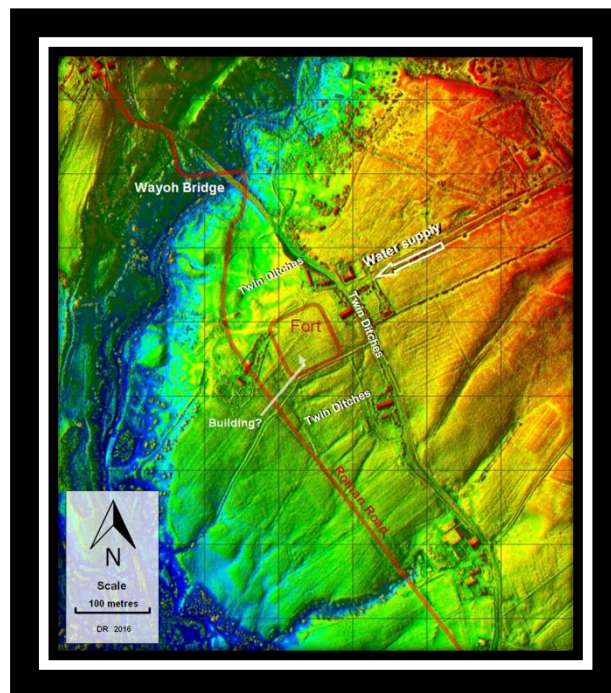
Connard enjoyed a diverse career, working as a portrait and landscape painter, and also as an illustrator, textile designer, and as a teacher at the Lambeth School of Art. He was a founding member of the National Portrait Society. During World War I he was an official war artist to the

laser beam from an aircraft and collects three dimensional “point clouds” from the reflected light. The information is used in mapping software, and can be adjusted so as to ignore vegetation, and will show variations in heights down to 15cm. The possibilities are breathtaking. Have a look at <http://www.romanroads.org/> for examples. LIDAR has already been used to prove the route of a road from Ribchester to Lancaster, shown in Margary as a dotted line road 704, and new forts have been discovered along known routes.

This is probably old hat to many of you, but I want to use this miracle of modern science to see whether what I think are Roman routes – one running from Cellarhead crossroads through Endon up towards the known fort at Astbury just south of Congleton, and another I suspect crossing the Trent below Barton under Needwood, and continuing below Abbots Bromley, possibly heading to the Roman camp at Hollywood near Hilderstone.

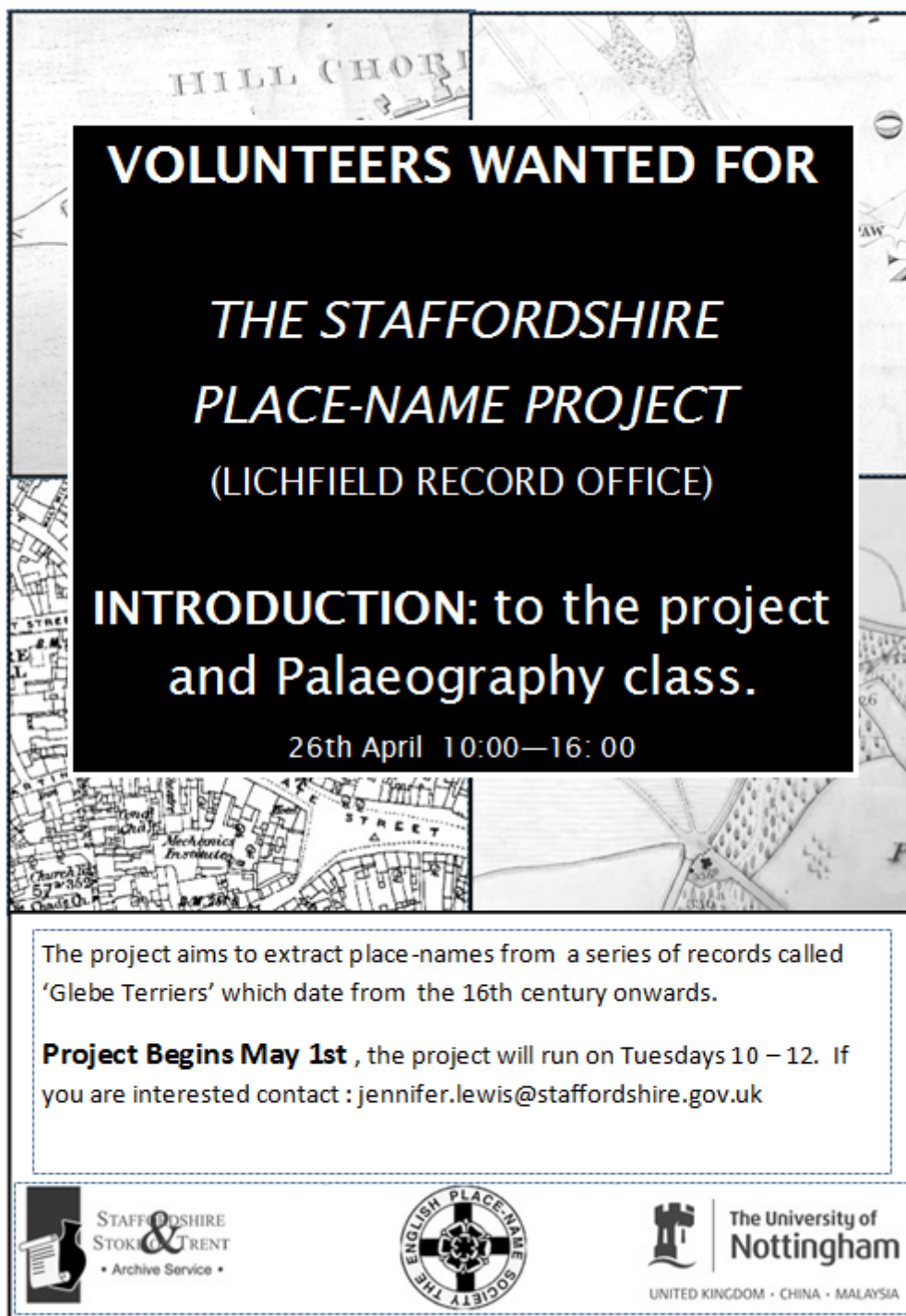
As I have no experience at all with mapping software, I was hoping that we may have a surveyor or someone similar in the society who knows how to use GIS software...maybe. Any help would be appreciated. My email is davewithington59@gmail.com. Also if anyone wishes to correspond please do so.

Here’s an example of the output from LIDAR co-ordinates, showing the road from Manchester to Ribchester, confirming the existence of a previously suspected fort, not easily visible on the ground



Volunteers Wanted for Historical Research

Staffordshire Archives and Heritage are looking for **volunteers** to work on a new project based in Lichfield. The project is being organised in partnership with the Institute for Name Studies at the University of Nottingham and the English Place Name Society. The project started in April but there is still a need for more volunteers. Details below.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR


*THE STAFFORDSHIRE
PLACE-NAME PROJECT*
(LICHFIELD RECORD OFFICE)


**INTRODUCTION: to the project
and Palaeography class.**


26th April 10:00—16:00

The project aims to extract place-names from a series of records called 'Glebe Terriers' which date from the 16th century onwards.

Project Begins May 1st, the project will run on Tuesdays 10 – 12. If you are interested contact : jennifer.lewis@staffordshire.gov.uk

 STAFFORDSHIRE
& STOKES-ON-TRENT
• Archive Service •

 THE ENGLISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY

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Nottingham
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More Volunteering Opportunities

Staffordshire has recently appointed a new County Archaeologist in succession to Stephen Dean who has moved on to another post. Our new colleague is Shane Kelleher, and he has already been in touch with the Society to discuss a couple of projects that are taking shape at the moment, focussed on the Trent valley. Shane is looking for volunteers who might be interested in taking part in these archaeological projects, and has asked whether any members of SAHS might be interested. This is the perfect opportunity for anyone who might have been thinking about how they might get involved with archaeological work 'in the field'. There is a wide scope of roles and skills sets available for volunteers to consider, from field survey to record office research, and full induction and support will be offered. Shane has given us the following description of the two projects -

Transforming the Trent Valley- call for potential volunteers

Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Team are currently developing two heritage focussed projects as part of the Transforming the Trent Valley HLF Stage 2 Landscape Partnership bid which is being put together by the Central Rivers Initiative and the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. As part of this process we are looking for expressions of interest and support from local groups who may be able to provide or mobilise volunteers to participate in the delivery of these projects.

The first project will focus on the military history of the Trent Valley, and particularly the numerous pillboxes which made up the iconic 'Stop Line'. Volunteers will undertake a condition survey of each of the pillboxes within the project area, carry out research, including oral histories, into the history of the 'Stop Line' and those who used it during or since the Second World War, and assist with the conversion of a number of these sites for sustainable and reversible uses such as wildlife refuges, bird hides, interpretation sites, and geocache locations.

The second project relates to improving the condition and management of heritage deemed to be at risk within the project area. Volunteers, with the assistance of historic environment specialists will develop a targeted programme of assessment, survey, and monitoring for their management and conservation. Improved management would be delivered through liaison with local landowners and conservation works undertaken by volunteers.

Both projects will be overseen and managed by a Heritage Project Officer who will be funded by the Transforming the Trent Valley project. Volunteers will be provided with appropriate training for their involvement and the nature and time commitment of their contribution would very much be down to their availability and interests.

Our Stage 2 bid will be submitted in the summer of 2018 and we hope to hear if this is successful later in the year. If funding is received the project will begin in April 2019 and will run for four years.

If anyone is interested in finding out more or 'signing up', please let the SAHS Hon President (John Hunt) know and he will contact Shane on your behalf.

At the Record Office in Stafford a new project has just started involving transcribing the records of the work done by parish councils in the 1950s defining rights of way in the county. These are still the definitive legal sources for the existence (or otherwise) of footpaths and a small group is working on making the papers more accessible to the public. New volunteers to do this work will be welcome ; contact Richard Totty

STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LECTURE SEASON 2018-2019

28th September 2018 Dr Richard Bifield

1709-2009: Celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Birth of the Industrial Revolution at Coalbrookdale

1709 refers to the date when Abraham Darby first perfected the technique of smelting iron using coke from coal as opposed to charcoal the traditional fuel. From the innovation stemmed a whole series of technological firsts that made Coalbrookdale the world's most important iron making district by the end of the 18th century.

Richard qualified as a Town Planner working at Lincoln, Newcastle upon Tyne, Reading and finally before retiring Wrekin as Conservation Officer. Since retirement Richard spends his time between Publicity/Education Officer for Shropshire Historic Churches Trust, Wellington Literary Festival and other voluntary organisations.

12th October 2018 Nigel Page

Recent Investigation at Baginton Warwickshire

Nigel has worked in commercial archaeology for 30 years, starting as a site assistant on large scale excavations in South Wales and then working his way up to Head of Field Operations with the Dyfed Archaeological Trust. Following a move to Norfolk he worked across the east and south-east of England, before spending some time as a consultant in the north of England. Following a spell as an independent self-employed archaeologist, he joined Archaeology Warwickshire in early 2017.

26th October 2018 Dr Malcolm Dick

Slavery, Anti-Slavery and the Black Presence in the West Midlands 1700 to 1838'

After 1700, the West Midlands became increasingly connected with a global economy. One dimension involved the export of manufactured products to Africa and the West Indies as part of the transatlantic slave trade - and one result was the arrival of black individuals in the area. By the late-eighteenth century, however, local people were also actively participating in the abolitionist movement. This presentation will explore and evaluate these aspects of the region's history with particular reference to Staffordshire evidence.

Malcolm is Lecturer in Regional and Local History at Birmingham University. He is also Editor in Chief of the "History West Midlands Project". His research work is predominately covering the West Midlands in all its aspects as well as being a prolific author.

9th November 2018 Shane Kelleher

Staffordshire Matters

Shane is Staffordshire County Archaeologist having recently taken up post. He was previously at Ironbridge. The talk tonight will encompass the forthcoming World War II "Stop Line" HLF

Project an update on Chase Through Time HLF Project together with an over view of the Archaeology at Ironbridge.

23rd November 2018 Dr David Freke

Mind the Gap: 2500 years of high level activity at Warmington, South Warwickshire

The talk describes the ten years of community investigation of a south Warwickshire prehistoric and Roman site in its landscape context. The "gaps" in the title are topographical, chronological, artefactual and interpretational, and they are as intriguing as the material revealed at the site, which includes 2 Roman coin hoards, a Neolithic burial, a massive iron age earthwork and much more.

David Freke MA DipAD FSA MCIfA has 50 years of experience of archaeological investigations, principally in England and the Isle of Man. He lives on a smallholding in South Warwickshire which includes a DMV and 70 sheep.

7th December 2018 Annual General Meeting
This will commence at 7.30pm

Mike Glasson

Walsall, Town of a Hundred Trades

A celebration of the remarkable diversity of trades which have been practised in Walsall over the past 800 years- everything from handbags and saddles for the Queen to wheelbarrows, whips, and washing machines. Lloyd George thought that Walsall had more trades than any other town of similar size in the country, and he was probably right! The talk will explore some of these trades in detail, and examine the themes of ingenuity, excellence, adaptability and diversity which have characterised the local manufacturing tradition.

Mike is a graduate of York and Leicester universities. He was curator of the Walsall Leather Museum for 30 years and Head of Walsall Museums Service until his recent retirement. He lives in Walsall.

Meetings are held in the Guildhall Lichfield starting at 8.00pm except for the AGM which starts at 7.30pm. Refreshments are available before the meeting.

View expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Society

This newsletter edited for the Society by Richard Totty richard.totty4@gmail.com

Riddle answer ; a bell in a steeple